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ABSTRACT

Lewis-Clark State College, Idaho, developed a model program, Partnerships Project, designed to provide rural community residents with access to higher education and to assist communities in increasing their local capacity for development. In pursuing these objectives, the program helped to change the nature of the postsecondary undertaking in northern Idaho. During the course of the project outreach operations and classes were established in eight communities with over 100 classes provided to rural learners and 500 learners taking advantage of a program component designed to assist those wishing to re-enter educational or job-related programs. This "educational triage" was successful and used a single point of entry to guide rural learners through a self-evaluation and goal setting process. The project also offered a response to rural decline through programs and consulting that assisted communities in recognizing their own capacity for change and in planning to facilitate that change. An effort was made over all to integrate outreach students, non-traditional students, and others into the institution's one system thereby precluding a lower status for non-traditional participants. An appendix comprising half the document contains a copy of the program evaluation report. (JB)

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THE PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT: LINKING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO REVITALIZE RURAL COMMUNITIES INTO GLOBAL VILLAGES

FINAL REPORT

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

THE PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT: LINKING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO REVITALIZE RURAL COMMUNITIES INTO GLOBAL VILLAGES

FINAL REPORT

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THE PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT: LINKING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO REVITALIZE RURAL COMMUNITIES INTO GLOBAL VILLAGES

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SUMMARY

The Partnerships Project emerged from experiences in rural areas that identified the interaction between the decline of rural communities and the need for increasing access to educational opportunity for rural learners as a critical point for intervention. Because of the success of the Project in addressing this need, the college has institutionalized an effective model for providing outreach services. This model not only provides access to educational opportunity, but also assists communities in increasing their local capacity for development. Finally, it has involved the entire campus in a reassessment of the role of outreach in the College's mission, course delivery system, and student services. This project has, then, changed the nature of the postsecondary undertaking in north Idaho while at the same time assisting communities in reconceptualizing higher education and its relationship to community revitalization.

THE PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT: LINKING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO REVITALIZE RURAL COMMUNITIES INTO GLOBAL VILLAGES: FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1986 Lewis-Clark State College successfully competed for a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to develop a model for linking students enrolled in postsecondary baccalaureate programs with community economic development efforts. The creation of the Partnerships Project initiated a new learning experience for both the college and the rural communities which it serves.

The Partnerships Project builds on a tradition of educational outreach. In the past 10 years Lewis-Clark State College has become a regional leader in overcoming barriers to educational opportunity and in developing new programs and delivery systems to reach these new students previously blocked by such barriers. This continuing commitment has involved the college in an experiential learning program, an independent study program with classes available through regional public libraries, the development of off-campus outreach centers, and the use of such non-traditional delivery formats as Weekend College, Wintersem, and Live and Learn. Despite these efforts, the College continues to receive a growing number of educational requests it cannot meet. The majority of these requests originate in the more remote, rural areas of the state or from among workers whose seasonal work schedule or job travel requirements make taking classes difficult if not impossible. Many of these students live in communities facing serious decline.

The intent of the project was to link rural community development with course content, requirements, and activities in order to facilitate both community economic development and student learning. In fact, the Partnerships Project was not able to link large numbers of students to community projects nor did many of its students learn to assume active roles in the community development process. Instead, project staff were able to identify

and link two spheres of interaction: student re-entry and retention, and community economic development. These spheres overlap occasionally in a given student's activities, but in general, represent separate realms of activity that come together in an integrated service delivery program through the outreach center. In the process of trying out a new model for outreach, college staff gained greater insight into rural development and the need for postsecondary opportunities.

Project Results

During the course of the project, staff developed outreach operations in Orofino, Grangeville, and Deary. In addition classes were established in Lapwai, Kamiah, Kooskia, Riggins, and Kendrick. While the Orofino Center has the longest history having served over 50% of the city households and over 25% of the county households, the other centers are creating similar numbers. Indeed, it is not unusual for the Orofino Center to log in over 4000 requests for information or services each year. Over one hundred classes have been provided to rural learners during the course of the project. In addition, however, an estimated 500 learners have taken advantage of the "educational triage" program to re-enter educational or job-related programs. The collaborative ventures developed through this effort remain in place continuing both to expand services and to reach out to adult learners through North Idaho. Beyond serving the needs of a number of students and communities, the project has made a difference in three specific areas including rural learner recruitment and retention, postsecondary responses to rural decline, and institutionalization of an outreach focus.

Rural Learner Recruitment and Retention: Foremost among the project's achievement is the development, implementation and dissemination of an educational triage approach to provide meaningful educational opportunity to rural adult learners. This model emerged from both an understanding of the barriers rural adults face in attempting to access educational programs and several years' experience working with rural learners in a variety of locations. The model uses a single point of entry to then guide rural learners though a self-evaluation and goal setting process. Participants develop a life/work/learn plan, and project staff assist in implementing individual plans.

The experience of the Partnerships Project indicates that outreach to rural areas can result in cycles in the types of students

recruited. These cycles are similar to those reported by dislocated worker programs. Our centers do 'cream off' the well prepared and highly motivated students during the first stages of recruitment. Later, more students appear with poor basic skills, personal and/or family problems, and low self-esteem. Our project has had to develop new programs and types of assistance, particularly in teaching basic skills, to meet the needs of these students.

Responses to Rural Decline: The college has also developed an effective approach to assisting rural communities in revitalization efforts. Interventions include both enabling and technical assistance. That is, the Partnerships Project offers programs and consulting that assist communities in recognizing their own capacity for change and in planning to facilitate that change. The outreach centers, then, become information centers that tie local community leaders into a 'web' of resources and expertise. The goal of the project has been to create local ownership of both the educational triage program and the community development efforts. Thus, project staff have focused on identifying areas of both personal and community change and provided assistance to individuals and groups in accepting and managing this change.

Clearly, there is a great need for postsecondary responses to rural decline. The experience of the Partnerships Project suggests that institutions of higher education can best meet this need by developing a real and meaningful presence in the community and by offering services to assist individuals seeking educational opportunity as well as community leaders. While these two services may require different areas of expertise, the interaction of these programs is critical to providing a meaningful outreach service.

Institutionalizing an Outreach Focus: While many institutions have developed a second college system for dealing with outreach and non-traditional students, the Partnerships Project has worked with college staff to effectively integrate all students into one system. This integration has alleviated the stigma often associated with non-traditional students as being second class learners. Furthermore, students no longer get lost in the cracks between systems. Finally, the integration process has increased the quality of services as well as course content as students from various backgrounds with diverse needs meet together seeking student services assistance or participating in a class.

Summary

Evaluation materials generated on the Project indicate that both communities and students re-evaluate past failures and problems in light of their new successes. Thus, the college's programs often become an invisible hand guiding groups and individuals through the process of acknowledging change, of creating a belief in a positive future, and of planning and implementing a strategy to reach that future.

As a result of these learning experiences, Lewis-Clark State College has developed an effective model for providing outreach services in rural areas. It has also provided a comprehensive capacity development program to the rural communities it serves. Finally, it has involved the entire campus in a reassessment of the role of outreach in the College's mission, course delivery system, and student services. This project has, then, changed the nature of the postsecondary undertaking in north Idaho while at the same time assisting community leaders and prospective rural learners in reconceptualizing higher education and its relationship to community futures.

THE PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT: LINKING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO REVITALIZE RURAL COMMUNITIES INTO GLOBAL VILLAGES

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The plight of rural communities has become an issue for many institutions of higher education for two reasons. First, many colleges depend on the economic health of their service area for continued growth and support. Secondly, many new students are seeking postsecondary opportunities as a result of rural decline. Despite the fact that there is no consensus on the need to rescue these communities from demise, a number of institutions have seen that it is in their own best interest to address the impact of rural decline.

Rural decline results from the fact that small communities, in general, continue to lose population and income. Efforts toward rural revitalization have had difficulty succeeding in small remote communities. North Idaho, which is exceptionally rural, with population densities so low that the majority of its counties are considered frontier counties, is no exception. Preliminary census data indicate that most areas have lost population, and many also are experiencing relative declines in per capita income. At the same time communities are losing jobs and people, new technologies have transformed existing jobs so that workers must acquire new skills in order to retain their jobs. Many of the people choosing to stay in rural areas look to education and training opportunities as solutions to the need for developing skills in the use of new technologies as well as for expanding local job markets.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Responding to the needs of these communities has created a complex challenge for Postsecondary education. Despite the assertion that, "education is at the Heart of the Rural Revitalization effort," few examples illustrating higher education's potential contribution to revitalization are available. The purpose of the Partnerships Project was to design and pilot of new model for

higher education, one that acknowledges the context in which students seek educational opportunity.

During the course of the project, program staff developed outreach operations in Orofino, Grangeville, and Deary. In addition classes were established in Lapwai, Kamiah, Kooskia, Riggins, and Kendrick. While the Orofino Center has the longest history having served over 50% of the city households and over 25% of the county households during its first three years of operation, the other centers of activity are creating similar numbers. Indeed, it is not unusual for the Orofino Center to log in over 4000 requests for information or services each year. Over one hundred classes have been provided to rural learners during the course of the project. In addition, however, an estimated 500 learners have taken advantage of the educational triage program to re-enter educational or job-related programs. The collaborative ventures developed through this effort remain in place continuing both to expand services and to reach out to adult learners through North Idaho.

The project's success cannot be measured by student participation alone. In addition to developing a model for re-entry students that focuses on retention issues as well as student recruitment, the project has, in fact, impacted nearly all aspects of institutional life. The College has made great changes in accommodating courses, students services, and access to faculty time for non-traditional and off-campus learners. The new challenges in instruction and advising emerging from this reconceptualizing and restructuring process have provided an impetus to focus faculty attention and time on improving the general educational requirements and expanding the number of delivery options available to students. Perhaps the most extraordinary change has occurred in student services, where project staff work with other campus departments and staff to design and implement methods of bringing a wide range of student services to the outreach sites. The integration of re-entry students, off-campus and place-bound students, and non-traditional learners into the every day activity of the college has created a better working and learning environment for all.

Finally, the project has developed a process for working with community development and economic groups that has proved very successful. Through the Partnerships Project, community leaders can access a variety of technical assistance, organizational

development training, community capacity building programs, job training, and business development services. During the three year period, project staff cooperated with the State Department of Commerce's Gem Communities Program for Rural Revitalization. Communities accessing the program through Lewis-Clark State College have, in fact, among the highest rates of success in achieving Gem Community Program goals.

A fundamental lesson learned from the Project is that there is no substitute for presence in providing educational services to rural communities. Furthermore, this presence must evolve in such a way as to integrate the postsecondary experience and resources into existing community activities, organizations, and problems. Clearly, rural communities want and need the assistance of institutions of higher education to facilitate both community growth and development and to provide access to educational and training, particularly for the growing numbers of dislocated workers, single parents, and underemployed workers.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Partnership Project was to pilot a model whereby institutions of higher education can provide meaningful access to rural adults, assist with community revitalization efforts, and link these efforts to long-term and effective leadership and community capacity building. Specifically, the project had the following goals:

Establish an administrative unit acting as a statewide change agent working with educational providers to link educational programs with economic development in five rural communities.

Design and pilot model educational programs correlated with a proven community development model to provide access to baccalaureate degree programs which link academic theory with practical application in the community.

Coordinate access to the unique strengths in faculty, support services, programs, and resources available through individual educational providers to create a comprehensive postsecondary educational program.

Develop materials, methods of delivery, and curriculum to support an articulated approach to rural education including providing off-campus advising, access to library resources, and participation in a community of learners.

Disseminate the model, materials, and curriculum to other colleges and communities interested in increasing their ability to participate effectively in efforts for rural revitalization.

The Partnerships Project staff are change agents focusing educational resources and expertise on the economic revitalization of rural Idaho as well as assisting rural adults with educational re-entry. Through these efforts degree-seeking adults are able to access an effective re-entry and retention program through outreach centers. The outreach experience also provides the background necessary to develop an educational model that integrates classroom learning with direct experience working in the community. Finally, project staff facilitate leadership and capacity building activities to enable local leadership teams to work directly with community businesses, economic development associations, and community task forces, particularly in cooperation with the Idaho State Gem Communities Program.

BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS

The need for the Partnerships Project emerges from three specific problems: (1) the need to identify a cost-effective method for providing services to rural adults seeking educational opportunity, (2) the need to identify an effective postsecondary response to rural decline, and (3) the need to link education to community development efforts in order to enhance human resource development and to increase community capacity for managing change over time.

Overcoming Barriers to Rural Re-entry and Retention

According to a report issued by the Northwest Action Agenda for Rural Postsecondary Education, rural learners are not only less well represented in postsecondary institutions than their urban counterparts, they are also more likely to begin with a disadvantage (McDaniels et. al., 1986). Students interested in pursuing higher education often enter classes with lower skill levels than their more urban counterparts. For example, the adult population in many

rural areas of Idaho averages less than a 12th grade education -- a fact noted adversely by the many industries invited to consider relocating in the state.

Furthermore, rural adult learners face a number of barriers that make re-entry difficult and that contribute to lower retention rates. Many rural adults face distance and transportation difficulties. Others who are actively engaged in community, family, and work responsibilities must identify strategies for overcoming such situational barriers as time and money restraints. Many others face personal and psychological barriers related to their lack of experience with higher education, low self-esteem, and inadequate preparation for college level learning environments.

Lack of resources stands squarely amid the problems rural learners face. Dislocated workers, displaced homemakers and others interested in educational opportunities do not have the resources to pay the costs. Institutions find providing quality programs and services designed to overcome the barriers facing rural learners more expensive than other educational programs.

Furthermore, educational institutions have found themselves unable to reach rural adults. Institutions lack information about this population; their faculty lack an understanding of rural culture and concerns, and programs are unable to effectively overcome their campus-biased delivery system. Clearly, designing an effective model for reaching and serving these students cost effectively is, indeed, a complex challenge.

Postsecondary Responses to Rural Decline

At the time the Partnerships Project began, it was one of several attempts to understand the potential role of higher education in rural development. Since state schools in rural areas are often intricately linked with their service area, a number of colleges including Eastern Oregon and Southwest State in Minnesota, began to identify roles of the college in economic development. In addressing the need for an educational response to rural decline, the Partnerships Project went beyond the traditional training/retraining, small business assistance, and community development training, to try to link access to courses and actual course activity to the need for local capacity building. In doing so,

the college drew upon a number of traditions in economic and community development.

Until recently many programs attempting to assist rural economic development have been based on urban models emphasizing the attraction of new industries and the development of retraining programs. These approaches have been singularly unsuccessful in rural communities. Despite the willingness of rural people to work, to work hard, and to work for less, rural communities lack the necessary infrastructure, often offer poor transportation resources, and have inadequate educational, cultural, and healthcare resources to successfully recruit large industries.

Similarly retraining programs require a large enough pool of jobs to make retraining in specific skills cost-effective; a situation unlikely in a small community. Retraining that functions as a passport out of a depressed rural area also falls short of its goal. The experience in Idaho is illustrative. Many of those laid off from mining or timber jobs and retrained for jobs elsewhere have come back to the area as unemployed or underemployed workers waiting for something better to come up in their home environment.

Newer approaches offer better possibilities for rural communities by incorporating models from community development with academic curriculum, access to vocational education, and small business development programs. These programs (Western Rural Development Center, Heartland Center, Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, Harvesting Hometown Jobs, etc.) utilize approaches that involve community assessment, organizational development assistance, small business support, and business diversification. Critical to the success of these efforts is the development of an effective organizational structure, increased leadership capacity within the community, and a willingness within the community to invest in its future. Indeed, rural revitalization while dependent on global factors requires a local solution.

Clearly, educational resources and opportunity play a vital role in economic development. For example, regions with well educated citizens are likely to show more economic growth than areas where educational attainment is lower (Cross and McCarten, 1984). Consequently. educational programs in rural areas are critical to rural economic development and must be linked to postsecondary opportunities in economic development planning. Postsecondary

education, however, has not been the resource for change or economic growth in Idaho or in most of rural America for that matter (McDaniels, et. al. 1986). There is, therefore, a need to establish methods by which postsecondary education can become an effective partner in rural revitalization programs.

Linking Educational Opportunity and Community Development to Facilitate Local Capacity Building

Perhaps the greatest challenge undertaken by the Partnerships Project was the need to link educational opportunity with community development. In the past community development efforts have remained separate from adult education, community education, or vocational training programs. Furthermore, community development efforts have often become isolated within the business community lacking the support from wider segments of the local population. Lack of communication also exists among providers. Indeed, it has not been uncommon for postsecondary providers of education and training to be working in a rural area unaware of other postsecondary or economic development assistance to that same community.

Summary

Rural America is undergoing rapid and intensive structural change. Individuals caught in change need access to the opportunities available through higher education in order to plan for a reasonable future for themselves and their families. Similarly, the very communities within which these adults live must also begin forming a new concept of their community, one that embraces the challenges of the 21st century, but that also retains and strengthens the unique aspects of the local community. Higher education can be a catalyst moving both communities and individuals into new modes of thinking about themselves and their futures. Higher education can also provide training, technical assistance, and educational programs to develop new skills and knowledge bases. In addition, college staff can link communities and individuals to the 'web of resources' available to them. Finally, by integrating community development with educational opportunity, colleges can enhance student learning while integrating community groups and facilitating leadership development.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project efforts revolved around 7 areas of activity:

1. Establish a campus focus for rural postsecondary education charged with the development and delivery of innovative courses and programs for rural learners, providing a full range of counseling and advising support, articulating a curriculum for rural learners with degree programs at LCSC and other state institutions, and making isolated rural communities a resource for education and growth.

2. Involve college and university faculty, administration, and outreach staff in designing curriculum models focused on community development.

3. Involve rural learners in participatory planning and community development.

4. Develop innovative curriculum approaches as an integral part of program.

5. Implement transition/re-entry programs for rural learners lacking academic experience.

6. Integrate service and curriculum components.

7. Evaluate the project and disseminate results throughout the region.

The project evolved from an initial outreach center in Orofino, Idaho. Orofino lies 45 miles up river from the college on one of the most dangerous highways in the country. Its population of 3500 people includes a number of government workers, woods and mill workers employed in the timber industry, and retail and service workers. The area has a history of high cyclical and structural unemployment as well as a below average per capita income. During the past decade it has both lost population and jobs as well as market position.

At the time the college opened the outreach center, many community leaders were desperate for change. Through the services

offered by the Partnerships Project, the community was able to form a community economic development organization and to be accepted into the state Gem Communities Program. Staff assistance in developing leadership and facilitating community development activities has been critical to the community's success. At the same time the college has assisted over 50% of the community and 25% of the households in the surrounding area in accessing educational opportunity or technical assistance.

This model has been extended to other communities with similar success. Rural people want and need educational opportunities. At the same time rural community leaders need both technical assistance and leadership development. The outreach center, then, becomes not only a catalyst for change for both groups, but also facilitates communication across community segments. Independent research on these efforts corroborates the college's success in these areas.

At the same time, the project staff have become advocates for rural adults learners. This process of representing the needs and special conditions of adult learners has created the vision necessary to establish new procedures and policies to facilitate the **integration** of off-campus students into the LCSC family. Thus, the project has become a vehicle for representing the campus to non-traditional clients and partners while at the same time representing the needs of interests of off-campus participants in order to facilitate internal change.

PROJECT RESULTS

The Partnerships Project has made a difference; both in the rural communities the campus serves and in the campus itself. These observations were no where more evident than in recent evaluation activities. The evaluation results show conclusively that the campus is not the same; it has indeed been transformed. Similarly, the presence of the college in rural communities has become a part of the web of resources community leaders expect to work with.

In relation to the specific activities, project results include the following:

1. Establish a campus focus for rural postsecondary education

Since the inception of the Partnerships Project, the college has developed, submitted and received State Board approval for an Institute for Community Development. Although the legislature has not funded the Institute, it has been able to secure funding for additional projects and continues to operate as a clearinghouse for off-campus activities, as a resource for community development activities, and as liaison to other agencies and institutions involved in community and economic development. One example of the Institute's success is the Forest Service grant to fund a project on attracting retirees as an economic diversification strategy. This project actively involves four rural communities in designing and implementing a program to attract retirees. It has also meant collaboration with a number of agencies and organizations. Finally, the project shows great promise in assisting communities in enhancing the future of their retail and service sectors while creating the possibility for several new jobs in each community.

2. Involve college and university faculty, administration, and outreach staff in designing curriculum models focused on community development

Since the pre-project findings about community leaders being interested in community/economic development courses were not accurate, our approach has involved two separate methods of providing educational programs. On the one hand, we have developed a new course related to rural revitalization. In addition we have modified some courses to focus on specific questions relevant to rural development. We have also developed and offered a number of courses not specifically related to community/economic development, but rather responding to the needs of specific groups of students in the outreach areas. On the other hand, we have established a method of working with rural communities on rural revitalization projects including the development of a number of modules or on-site short-term training workshops or programs relevant to community/economic development and delivered in cooperation with the Gem Communities Programs, Chambers, or Community Development Associations. Staff also provide technical assistance as necessary. In addition the Small Business Development Center has provided training in relationship to specific economic development needs.

3. Involve rural learners in participatory planning and community development.

Early in the project, we organized several student groups to assist us with planning and developing course schedules and offerings. Over the course of the project, we have developed more informal methods for receiving student input. In addition we are working to establish community advisory groups that will enable the college to be more responsive to training and education needs within the community.

It will take some time for our outreach centers to develop cohorts of students who have similar interests and a willingness to work together to improve services since a goodly proportion of our students see educational opportunity as a ticket out of the rural setting. Many others see the need for education as a result of individual decisions rather than as an aspect of life in rural communities. Idaho does not have a recent history of collective action, and the emphasis on individuality obscures both the common underlying reasons for unemployment as well as the importance of group support. Thus, many observers can contrast our students and their lack interest in participating in planning activities with similar groups in the South or Appalachia that have taken an active ownership in outreach sites. However, since some community developers working in rural areas have observed that real change only occurs when the current generation in power dies off, the level and rate of change within our rural, poor, and distant outreach communities is, in fact, encouraging.

4. Develop innovative curriculum approaches as an integral part of program.

Students participating in the outreach program can choose from a variety of course delivery systems. Local libraries provide support for individualized study programs. Commuting students can take weekend classes, night classes, and intensive one week courses. In addition, more communities now have their own Wintersem or Live and Learn programs. With the new technologies currently available to the college, we look forward to offering some courses via computer to the more remote areas of the state and to providing both faculty and students with a menu of possibilities from which to develop course components.

5. Implement transition/re-entry programs for rural learners lacking academic experience.

Perhaps the most visibly successful element of the Partnership Project's activities is this component focusing on re-entry and retention of rural learners. Working collaboratively with the Center for New Directions, the outreach centers can assist rural adults in identifying career interests, in developing life/work goals, and in implementing immediate steps to reach these goals. This educational triage approach involves an in-take point from which a variety of services and programs may be accessed. Some participants are referred to Job Service and JTPA training programs for short-term training while others are admitted to longer term academic and vocational programs. Typically, participants visit the outreach center a number of times before taking action, and often return at a later date to work on a subsequent step in their plan. Thus, for example, we have worked with displaced homemakers in developing job skills for immediate employment and at a later date have assisted them in entering a long term vocational or academic program.

The care taken with each student and the follow-up built into the system also have an impact on retention. Students entering the program are contacted regularly allowing problems to be identified early on and appropriate steps taken to correct them. Students develop a personal relationship with the outreach advisor that continues when they transfer, as many of them do, to the campus.

6. Integrate service and curriculum components.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the project was to develop a system whereby students utilizing the outreach centers would be able to access the same student services that on-campus students can access. Two approaches to providing outreach services have evolved among institutions of higher education. Many institutions have two colleges in one. The first serves traditional college students in the traditional manner. The second system exists for non-traditional students with non-traditional needs. Each system has its own method for registration, advising, and course delivery. In many cases, however, institutions using this approach are plagued by the difficulties that arise when the two systems interact, as they must, particularly in the registrar's office.

A second method, and the one chosen by Lewis-Clark State College is to integrate the two spheres into one system blurring the distinction between traditional and non-traditional and focusing, instead, on the need to provide services in a variety of formats. This approach has taken time to develop and evolve, but it has been very successful. Student services staff as well as most faculty and all administrators expect to spend part of their time in an outreach setting as a regular part of their job. Off-campus students are no longer considered as, or treated as, second class students. Furthermore, students can move between systems of delivery easily without getting lost in the cracks. Finally, the overall quality of services has improved because of this focus on serving a diverse group of students, and the college has benefited from the richness of human experience that is integrated throughout the curriculum rather than isolated in one delivery format.

7. Evaluate the project and disseminate results throughout the region.

The Partnerships Project was evaluated each year. During the first year, Dr. M. Tangelesi from the National Center for Law and Justice met with the project steering committee and visited outreach sites. Upon his recommendation the project submitted the Institute for Community Development proposal to the State Board of Education and also worked with a number of non-profit agencies to offer a Community Development Workshop. The project was also evaluated by Glen Pulver from the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service. Dr. Pulver's long experience in community and economic development was useful to the program in identifying community development strengths. Finally, a project evaluation was undertaken by Jim Long from Washington State University's Adult and Continuing Education Program. Dr. Long conducted focus groups in three outreach community sites, interviewed faculty and students. His report is appended.

All evaluation efforts have supported the college's drive to reach out to the rural communities. Both initial evaluators brought up the issues of resources, and the lack of resources continues to plague outreach efforts, although many elements of the Partnerships Project have, in fact, been institutionalized within the college. In addition, since the link between students and community leaders proved weaker than originally assumed, evaluators have expressed

concerns over the need to target specific audiences with college services and programs. Indeed, we set out in the Project to demonstrate a the need for higher education to reach out to rural communities, and while our initial assumptions about how to do that proved false, our experiences certainly amplify that need.

Finally, an economic impact study on the presence of the college in Orofino indicated that providing outreach services has a positive impact on local economies; it produces a job, circulates money locally, and links community businesses to training, economic, and business development resources.

Project and College staff have disseminated project results at several professional meetings, through consultations, and informally through professional associations. In addition copies of the Project Report will be distributed to a number of institutions and agencies concerned with rural revitalization and educational opportunity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Like most undertakings of this nature, the Partnerships Project began with a specific program design that altered as the design was fitted to real communities and people. Despite these alterations, the project has clearly made a difference to the communities it has served, to the adult learners it has recruited, and to the institution itself.

These differences are obvious when looking at the institution, learners, or communities in retrospect, but unremarkable to those currently engaged in related activities. It is this invisibility of the project that is both its greatest success and its most dangerous weakness. The Project is successful because rural community leaders, students, and campus personnel alike believe that they have made their own changes in their own time with their own resources. Thus, our clients clearly own their piece of the program and buy into a new concept of themselves and their futures. The weakness, however, is that because of this ownership in the new concept, we have lost a vital perspective on our collective past. The ability to understand and address our own history as well as the validation of program success are diminished by this loss. Specific lessons learned from the project are described below.

Postsecondary Responses to Rural Decline

As part of the FIPSE project, project staff developed techniques for working with local community development groups. While utilizing approaches used successfully elsewhere, the project modified these in four important ways. Firstly, the issue of presence is deemed critical. Through the Institute for Community Development, we are an ongoing partner in rural revitalization efforts. We do not disappear when the program, project, or contract is over. Secondly, the ability to link educational opportunity to community development enhances student learning while providing valuable human resources for small rural communities, many of whom lack any paid staff beyond a part-time city clerk. Thirdly, the College's ability to reflect back to communities their strengths and weaknesses, their values and concerns, and their image creates a very powerful force in mobilizing local residents to work for their community in the future. Finally, the College provides a wide variety of resources and our presence in the community facilitates links to business development, older workers programs, short-term training, and many other programs, and at the same time assists communities in establishing links to the web of resources beyond the College's domain.

Overcoming Barriers to Rural Re-entry and Retention

Perhaps the most important lesson learned from the project is that there is no substitute for presence. Being in the community on a regular basis has an impact beyond just providing services. For example, the College received a number of comments similar to, "If the College cares enough to put an office here, then our community must be special", or "The college's presence has had a positive impact on community self-esteem".

In addition, project staff have identified cycles in participant recruitment similar to those discovered in displaced worker training programs. For example, initial participants in the outreach programs tended to have good basic skills, be involved in a career, have high self-esteem, and to utilize good communications skills. They were also likely to have had some postsecondary experience. These students were self-starters and were highly motivated by career and personal needs to do well. These students were 'creamed' off the top in the first years of outreach effort. Subsequent

'pipeline' students tend to have a different profile and to require more assistance and more support. The development of the educational triage approach has been invaluable to working with these students. Of these students over 85% are eligible for financial aid, many are single parents, and a large proportion of them are experiencing or come from a family with substance abuse problems. With the triage approach their chances of accessing inappropriate educational programs or ones for which they are inadequately prepared are significantly reduced.

The College's approach of treating all students as members of the same College community has also impacted the overall attitude toward general education requirements and the quality of their delivery. Since these students tend to seek out education and training opportunities as ways of escaping the kinds of change in the job market and in family structure that have impacted their lives adversely, their participation in classes has been a catalyst for rethinking the college's approach to liberal arts. The dilemmas inherent in teaching students to embrace the ambiguity of change as they race away from it at top speed are obvious. The interest, however, in creating teachable moments for these students has been an invigorating challenge to faculty and one from which all students have benefitted.

Linking Educational Opportunity and Community Development to Facilitate Local Capacity Building

The grant proposal included a design for linking education and training opportunities to community economic development that was based on some assumptions about rural learners and community leaders that were not accurate. Firstly, we assumed that community leaders would be interested in taking credit bearing classes related to economic development. Many of the community leaders with whom we have worked in the past are not interested in earning credit for any reason, and their busy schedules preclude them from making commitments to extended educational and leadership development opportunities. Similarly, most students who are currently involved in outreach education are not linked to community leaders, and indeed, a significant number of them, particularly women who are single parents, describe their relationship with their community with some degree of bitterness. For them education is often a ticket out.

Thus, rather than directly linking education and community as initially described the project has developed a two tiered approach. We provide technical and enabling assistance, resource development, and networking for community leaders in order to assist them in improving the local opportunity structure. Through this assistance community leaders work together to create new and presumably better jobs for local residents. We also provide education, training, and career counseling to assist individuals in bettering their opportunities within the structure of opportunity. As a result the outreach centers have become meeting places for these two resident populations often translating between them and other times representing one group to another. This interaction of different community viewpoints and populations has provided the background for several innovative projects including a Youth-At-Risk pilot program and a reevaluation of current school practices vis-a-vis in-school drop-outs. In addition, project staff have created and offered an upper division integrative seminar on rural revitalization. Successful completion of this course can be used to fulfill the college's general education requirement for upper division value clarification coursework.

Despite these differences among our populations, there are some examples of students whose interests in education overlap with community development needs. The project has been particularly successful in identifying student practicum participants to act as research assistants to local communities participating in the State's Gem Communities Program to assist rural communities in developing and implementing a plan for revitalization. These students have learned a great deal about themselves and their community as well as learning about economic development and research techniques while assisting their communities to embark on a path toward a real future in the 21st century.

Rural communities do have a future in our society. Their success in making that future one that is desirable to community residents will depend in large part on their ability to link with postsecondary institutions. These institutions must be prepared to not only provide training and educational opportunities, but also to assist in community capacity building. These services will, in turn, lead to the recruitment of a more diverse student body and to the development of a variety of outreach delivery systems and programs. The incorporation of these new students and the programs that serve

them and their communities can and will transform college services enriching the learning environment and improving service delivery.

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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM EVALUATION

THE POWER OF PARTNERING:

An Evaluation of the Lewis Clark State College-FIPSE Partnerships Project:

Linking Postsecondary Education with Rural Economic Development

BY

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February, 1991

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  - Orofino, Janet Kayler, secretary, GEM Team
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- each interviewee--GEM Team members, LCSC students, LCSC faculty
- LCSC administrators who started us off and listened carefully near the end of this evaluation.

Jim Long
Barbara Long
Dwight Pace

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Abstract

The FIPSE Partnerships Project enabled Lewis Clark State College, between 1987 and 1990, to experiment with a way to link higher education with economic development of resource-dependent communities of North Central Idaho. An intent was to develop a curriculum that involves adult residents concurrently in both academic studies and their communities' economic development. This evaluation found that, indeed, the Partnerships Project contributed to community economic development but not so directly as the model implied. Instead, through LCSC courses, resource brokering, service, modeling, and personal presence, the Project contributed to building organizational and personal competencies and confidence that, in turn, contributed to the communities' quality of living--a concomitant to economic development.

I. Introduction

A. Rural Community Economic Decline

Many natural resource-based communities in North Central Idaho have experienced economic decline since the mid 1970s. Communities dependent upon agriculture, mining and timber and benefitting from short term construction projects did not sustain their populations, revenues and social services.

Clearly, a crucial need of many North Central Idaho communities relates to economic development, that, for example, may:

- o reduce retail leakage,
- o expand the number of residents employed by existing small, local businesses and by public service agencies,
- o enlarge the number of local businesses and public service programs,
- o attract transfer payments (such as retirement pensions) from external sources,
- o market the community to guests from outside the community (as through tourism), and
- o build an infrastructure, for example, of transportation, communications, housing, labor, processing technology, general education and aesthetics to support the goals above.

The state government of Idaho supports community economic revitalization, for example, through its Department of Commerce GEM Communities Project. Another means is to directly link Idaho's institutions of post-secondary education with the aspirations of resource-based communities. For example, the mandate of Lewis Clark State College (LCSC) in Lewiston, Idaho, includes "research related to . . . community service" and a "distinct mission" of "outreach . . . to meet the educational and training needs of a diverse population."

B. Higher Education's Responses

Institutions of higher education can offer learning opportunities for residents to:

- o recognize and understand larger, societal forces that influence local communities,
- o broaden their repertoire of strategies to cope with these changes,
- o acquire new skills to access outside resources, and
- o influence the very societal trends that impinge on their communities' welfare.

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How can institutions of higher education offer these educational opportunities that support economic development of resource-based communities? Several models are being tried:

- o invite key leaders from several communities to residential training on campus (e.g. Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program);
- o send itinerant faculty and other resource persons to consult with leaders of individual communities (e.g. Small Business Development Center programs), and
- o assemble leaders from communities within a region for training with teams of college faculty (e. g. Palouse Rural Development Project).

C. LCSC's New Model

LCSC suggested yet another model with several intriguing components:

- o develop a curriculum that parallels the process of community economic development,
- o enroll, perhaps, working adults who can act as a catalyst for economic development in rural communities,
- o support their studies toward a bachelors degree,
- o teach courses on campus and in newly established outreach centers,
- o award academic credit for students' contributions to their communities' economic development, and
- o employ a resident to broker community goals, prospective students' interests, and college resources.

Lewis Clark State College (LCSC), Lewiston, Idaho, won a $240,000 grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) to test this innovative model in several North Central Idaho communities over a three year period, 1987-1990. The pioneering strategy was called "The Partnerships Project: Linking Postsecondary Education with Rural Economic Development."

How well did this model work?

II. Evaluation Framework and Methodology

The framework used to guide this evaluation of "The Partnerships Project" is derived from an educational program events model developed by Bennett;* evaluation data can be collected at anyone or combination of the seven steps and criteria in the hierarchy, for example:

7. retail trade linkage was reduced.

6. changes in participants' on-going behaviors were positive.

5. changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations were positive.

4. participants' reactions were positive.

3. residents enrolled in courses, assumed volunteer leader roles as a part of their courses, completed courses, completed degree programs.

2. educational activities--courses; student services--were offered as scheduled.

1. faculty time, salary, space were adequate.

In this evaluation, we used four techniques to gather data:

1. Review of some secondary data, primarily for levels 1, 2, 3;
2. Individual interviews with three faculty members for especially levels 2 and 3;
3. Individual interviews with students for principally levels 4, 5, 6;
4. Focus Group Interviews among active knowledgeables in three Project communities--Grangeville, Orofino, Weippe--for data mainly about levels 4, 5, 6 and 7. (See App. A and App. B)

Data from all interviews helped us estimate the extent to which changes at the upper levels in the hierarchy can be attributed logically to the Project. Section III summarizes the findings and the relationships that became apparent. Section IV

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*Claude Bennett, "Analyzing Impacts of Extension Programs," Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington DC, 1976

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offers some generalizations and Section V identifies some possibilities for LCSC to consider in planning its future contributions to rural community economic development in Idaho.

The evaluation was limited to the perceptions of a selected few individuals, to the time allocated for data gathering and analysis and to the timing, coincident with the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf.

III. Evaluation Findings

This section is organized first to report findings at the upper levels in Bennett's hierarchy and, then, to report Project-related data to which the upper level outcomes can be attributed.

A. Focus Group Interviews

The Focus Group Interviews with community knowledgeables were structured to create a visual "history" of each community's economic development: What triggered economic development planning (App. C); the community's progress (App. D); what helped (1 and 2 below and App. E); its near term goals (App. F); and what would help in the near future. The following discussion emphasizes the educational "helps" that townspeople identified with LCSC and with other resources.

1. LCSC's Educational Contributions. Participants active in economic development in three Project communities identified six kinds of educationally valued contributions from LCSC during the Project:

Participants identified the substance of courses or workshops that LCSC faculty taught:

- o survey methodology
- o computers
- o decorating cakes as a business!
- o entrepreneurship
- o courses applied toward an undergraduate degree, particularly in the social services, that improve their communities' "quality of life," or "climate"--acknowledged as an indirect contribution to their communities' economic "vitality."

They also acknowledged the feature of awarding credit for life experiences--LCSC's "portfolio program."

A second kind of contribution was LCSC's helping communities became aware of and link with outside resources--Idaho's Centennial Celebration; Idaho's Department of Commerce, and its GEM Community Program; U.S. Forest Service and its program to help timber-dependent communities consider economic diversification strategies; Northwest Area Foundation's interest in rural health systems.

The assistance ranged from LCSC's "helping us become aware of resources," "helping us apply for grants" to "relating with" and "complementing" programs such as those mentioned above.

Yet a third kind of contribution was a service role: a branch of LCSC provided space for an office of an economic development effort; LCSC was identified as having formally surveyed senior citizens and entrepreneurs; and LCSC faculty were mentioned in identifying those who helped "grind out" grant proposals.

A fourth type of contribution was applying an integrated set of group process skills: the ability, for example, to help residents assess the representativeness of an ad hoc economic interest group and to create an "organization of organizations" that proved more nearly representative of the community's diversity and, in that way, help the new group more readily generate ideas and proposals that were understood, "owned" and implemented by the residents at large.

A fifth contribution was particularly intriguing. LCSC's "representative involvement" model was acknowledged and, then, applied to other community goals related, for example, to accommodating seniors in transition, health care, tourism and upgrading sewer and water systems. In each instance, the interviewees recognized the value of LCSC's involvement model in building community consensus and commitment.

A final contribution was much more personal. Residents acknowledged someone from LCSC who was willing to listen; they regarded the presence of an outsider who "because of her perspective gave us a sense of optimism;" they saw "Mary (Mary Emery, project administrator), as an "ally" who "asked us what we wanted to learn" and who showed that "the College cares about us."

In short, active knowledgeables in three outlying communities identified a span of LCSC contributions to economic development:

- o substantive instruction,
- o links with outside resources,
- o direct services,
- o group process skills,

- o an involvement model and
- o personal presence.

These contributions can be viewed in several ways:

- o some contributions were "instrumental" (how to do things); others were more oriented toward ends, goals, objectives;
- o some were focused on individual development; others on enterprise development, organizational development, communications development, or, in a broader sense, on community development;
- o the source of some contributions was institutional, e.g. credit for life experience and extension classes; others were idiographic, depending, instead, on the personality and rapport of an incumbent;
- o some "helps" were seen as distinctly LCSC's; others were seen as a strand in a "web of resources."

2. Other Educational Contributions. We turn now to a summary of other educational contributions--those opportunities for learning not necessarily attributed to LCSC--that group interviewees identified as having contributed to their communities' economic development; perhaps, over a time span longer than the Project:

- o outside consultants whose survey data or "community profile" proved useful: researchers "whose questions got us thinking,"
- o GEM Community Program of Idaho's State Department of Commerce:
  - o grant proposal handbook
  - o "certification" process
  - o "mock site visit"
  - o learning to develop five and one year plans
  - o being recognized as one of few communities who were certified and visited by "the Governor,"
- o Idaho's Centennial Celebration workshop on hosting tourists,
- o North Central Travel Association workshops on tourism and marketing,
- o Washington Water Power "Summit":
  - o citizens' assessments of strengths & weaknesses
  - o outsiders' assessments
  - o bus tour
  - o discussion of citizens' and outsiders' assessments,
- o USFS programs on "diversification" e.g. attracting retirees, and USFS summer training and employment of youth,
- o University of Idaho's expertise, for example, in the area of alternative forest products,

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- o Clearwater Economic Development Association workshop on starting an artists' cooperative,
- o visiting out-of-state to study a water/sewer system or retirees' facility,
- o relatives elsewhere who shared ideas, for example, about cooperative markets, and
- o reading trade journals and watching TV, for example, about prospective alternative forest products e.g. yewwood for a cancer drug.

Once again, this category of responses about other educational helps can be viewed from several perspectives:

- o some of the helps were highly individual; others were oriented more toward a program designed for a group or for an entire community;
- o some were targeted toward a specific community, others toward a consortium of communities or interests;
- o some were almost casual, incidental; others highly programmed; and
- o some were programmed by an outsider for a community; others relied more on the initiative of residents.

As a group, these other educational contributions suggest that those who were working toward economic development were open to alternatives and able to access a wide range of educational resources; they also suggest the power of learning as a part of action--learning for action, learning from action, i.e. praxis.

And when we recall an earlier observation--that LCSC helped residents become aware of additional outside resources--then we can acknowledge the importance of LCSC's educational brokering role and its being a partner in the larger "web of resources" employed for community economic development.

B. Interviews with Students

In this section, we focus on responses from LCSC students to search for relationships between hoped-for results--economic development--and the students' learning that was facilitated by the LCSC-FIPSE Partnerships Project.

By telephone, we interviewed seven returning adult students: two from Grangeville, three from Orofino and two from Weippe. Three were men, one from each community. Most were long time residents; some were new comers. Five were employed at least part time outside their homes during the academic year; one

employed at least part time outside their homes during the academic year; one other, a single parent with four children at home, considered herself a "full-time Mommie"; the seventh was employed during summers only. Our impression was that these adult students were seeking to sustain and invigorate their "roots" in their communities; they were not "looking for a ticket out."

Three had been awarded 12 to 30 academic credits for "life experience" through LCSC's portfolio program. Two had previously completed courses at community colleges but explained that they would not have gotten back into school if it had not been for the local outreach center.

All were studying toward bachelors degrees:

- o three in elementary education
- o two in business
- o one in criminal justice
- o one in social services

The courses they completed in Grangeville, Orofino and Lewiston represented five areas:

- o general education (English, literature, arts, history, communications)
- o social sciences and services (psychology, sociology)
- o business
- o accounting, statistics
- o criminal justice

Two had also completed individualized studies.

Students had applied these courses to current development goals in a number of ways:

- o historical research on the anticipated impact of a proposed road that would have by-passed a community,
- o local consumer surveys,
- o local teaching practicum,
- o voluntary work in several social service agencies and commercial firms, and
- o increased involvement in social organizations.

The relationships that the students cited between their completing LCSC courses and their communities' development were varied:

- o preparation for an occupation in, say, social service, teaching, nursing, business;

- o better understanding of their community--its youths' development, its social services, its relationship to the "global village"; and

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- self fulfillment and self confidence that led to more active involvement in community social concerns.

Direct benefits were also apparent in each community. In one case, the student had learned computer skills that proved useful to the city council and library. In another community, a student's having completed course work instilled greater self confidence, that led to involvement in a social group which, in turn, contributed money to the school.

And in yet a third community, an adult student--who was employed part time as a school bus driver, was preparing for a career in teaching, had finished a child development course and had completed a teaching practicum--helped school administrators and teachers better understand children from families in which one parent was incarcerated; that new understanding, the student explained, helped strengthen the elementary school curriculum, which, in turn, contributed to the communities' quality of life and, hence, to its economic well-being.

These examples illustrate intricate, subtle relationships between Project-sponsored learning opportunities and community economic development. They highlight the students' (a) commitments to their communities, (b) beliefs that improving a community's economic fortune depends, in part, on improving its quality of living and (c) personal sense of efficacy. "I have learned to make a difference."

Students envisioned LC's future contributions to economic development in terms of new options for more residents--helping search out viable enterprises, and helping residents, including women and youth, learn requisite personal and vocational skills to prepare for those occupations.

They also spoke fondly of people--instructors who stayed to visit after class; the English instructor, the sociology professor or the communications teacher who really cared; people from whom they derived a great deal and who can now help other residents develop.

Perhaps, current LCSC students were beginning to see themselves as educational brokers--partners in charting LC's future in their communities.

C. Interviews with Faculty

We now glance at the Partnership Project from the perspective of three LCSC faculty, two of whom taught at both the Lewiston campus and outreach centers. Two faculty taught business courses; one taught in the field of communications.

Among the communications courses were interpersonal communications (taught three times at an outreach center), public speaking, professional communications, organizational communications and small group communications.

The faculty member believed that communications courses may have contributed to economic development at three levels:

- o enhanced job performance in business as, for example, in sales;
- o preparing for employment or re-employment as, for instance, in helping displaced workers from a timber industry prepare for new occupations; and
- o resolution of interpersonal and group conflicts, as in community meetings.

Among the business courses were the following: business communications; human resource development (taught in four formats: regular term course, week long course, one evening a week during summer session; directed studies in three outlying communities in cooperation with local libraries); policy and strategies; leadership power; organizational behavior; and organizational relations.

The business courses and the features that the faculty believed were most directly linked to community economic development in North Central Idaho were as follows:

- o business communications,
- o human resource development,
- o organizational relations, particularly bargaining and negotiating, and
- o power, particularly as influenced by social stratification, taught through a simulation.

Business faculty helped students apply concepts from these courses directly to the students' employing organizations and also, for example, to the development of a cooperative artists' series in an outlying community.

In addition to teaching formal, credit courses, the faculty also contributed to economic development in other ways:

- o serving as a guest speaker at an invitational issues-based seminar for key agricultural leaders,
- o participating with the Small Business Development Center on tourism workshops in outlying communities,
- o consulting with public service providers, such as a city fire department,
- o consulting with development efforts, such as a regional travel association,
- o helping develop a voluntary tax assistance program with Native Americans, and
- o developing regional networks among selected business interests.

Opportunities for future contributions from LCSC to economic development noted by the faculty included the following:

- o a reaffirmation of adult students' work ethic and LC's instructional mission to help residents think critically,
- o an anthropological understanding of communities,
- o research into emerging technologies and their implications for employment and employment training,
- o research on regional demographic trends,
- o research on regional economic trends, and
- o a proposal for a substate economic development model and strategy.

A professional's contributing to an institution's outreach mission implies a giving of oneself. What personal rewards did the faculty receive in exchange? Here are some of their benefits from participating in the Partnerships Project:

- o meeting new adult students who are eager to learn,
- o listening to practitioners and then adapting an on campus curriculum,
- o fulfilling a professional "mission."

And, similarly, the Project's contributions to LCSC as an institution were seen as follows:

- o it helped close a communications gap between LCSC leaders and community leaders;

o it's a "growth factor"; it "helped us think beyond our little boxes, helped us think collectively, across disciplines."

Thus, faculty who participated in the Partnerships Project identified clear connections among (a) their teaching, development efforts, service activities and coaching roles, (b) the "students" with whom they worked and (c) the economic development of North Central Idaho communities. Also, faculty saw distinct opportunities to further contribute in the near future, opportunities that tended to emphasize research and strategic model building. In addition, faculty believed the benefits were reciprocal--they valued their experiences individually and noted the Project's positive impact on LCSC as a public institution of higher education.

IV. Generalizations

From our listening with knowledgeables active in community economic development, LCSC students in three outlying communities and faculty who teach outreach students, we've arrived at some generalizations:

1. LCSC contributed to economic development of resource-based communities in North Central Idaho. But LCSC's contribution may not have been so direct as the Partnerships Project model may suggest.

We saw little evidence that a LCSC curriculum systematically paralleled a process of community economic development. Instead, we came to appreciate LCSC's influence on those intermediary forces--the organizations that instigate community action and the individuals who initiate a vision and a planning process that engages organizations in community development.

LCSC contributed to organizational and personal development (a) through formal instruction related to personal awareness, occupational, and general education, (b) by modeling process skills in community, (c) by becoming a catalyzing strand in a web of learning and action resources mobilized from inside and outside the community and (d) building self confidence of residents who continued, or began, higher education and who then got involved in their communities.

In short, the Partnerships Project is seen now not so much as a device for rural community economic development but rather an instrument with which to craft other local tools--organizational and personal competencies--for economic development.

2. Resources committed to courses for general education, personal development and occupational education were regarded highly by different students. Any one of the three types of offerings--a core course, a personal development workshop, an occupational training program--was valued for its intrinsic qualities. Often, it was also prized because of its instrumental values, e.g. an interpersonal

communications course helped a displaced worker prepare for new employment; successfully completing a general education course in, say, English or sociology, built an adult's self esteem; occupational training helped achieve a more secure livelihood, which, in turn, whetted an appetite for general education. Multiple channels were available to pursue similar goals. Outcomes of a course may be larger and longer lasting than implied by the course objectives!

3. Successful adult students can now serve as "bridge leaders"--residents who help link personal, organizational and community aspirations with learning and action resources within the Project communities themselves and North Central Idaho.

4. Students and faculty both envisioned operational roles for LCSC in future economic development endeavors. The definition of LCSC roles was grounded in the need for alternative economic enterprises for more residents; the desire to comprehensively assess the feasibility of alternatives; the hope of generating and testing ideas collaboratively; the demand for models and skills to work cooperatively--in partnership!

V. Possibilities for LCSC

In this section, we introduce a wide range of educational program possibilities for LCSC. Some prospects or elements were suggested directly by the interviewees; others emerged from the evaluators' professional experiences, thoughts and discussions about the communities--their histories, what the residents prized about their experiences, their goals, resources and commitments.

The alternatives tend to suggest a "decision" orientation to education for economic development: Who is making what decisions? What data, information, knowledge, perspective or skill would they find helpful in making those decisions? What can LCSC muster to help them learn whatever is needed to make, to try and, then, to reflect on those decisions? In what ways can that "indigenous knowledge" then be utilized by others?

The possibilities are not ranked. Nor is their feasibility assessed here. We believe that the alternatives might well be reviewed by LCSC faculty and administrators, given their criteria, and representatives of the communities, given their aspirations and resources. Perhaps mutual explorations would be useful.

The alternatives are not offered as a "cafeteria line," nor as a "potluck," but rather as some possible entrees for a banquet, intentially and mutually planned by LCSC and the communities it serves.

1. Maintaining a physical place and a personal presence in each community. Recruit full time or part time resident staff, who, perhaps, on "retainer":

   - o "reads" the communities' "rhythms," aspirations and plans;
   - o engages other residents in envisioning ways to integrate formal and informal learning opportunities into their development;
   - o brokers learning interests and educational resources from LCSC and, perhaps, other institutions, as well;
   - o represents the community in efforts to develop region wide, perhaps, electronic systems to deliver education to small numbers of adult students scattered across great distances;

- manages local arrangements, including, perhaps, educational uses of newer communications technologies:
  - amplified telephone conferences
  - educational broadcast TV
  - satellite TV
  - circulating libraries
  - computer conferences
  - audio cassette tapes
  - video cassette tapes
  - local bus tours
  - study tours
  - small group discussions
  - mobile classrooms
  - combinations of the above

Resident staff might well come from among the current cohort of I.CSC students.

2. Strategic planning. Offer process skills training locally to:

- enable residents to relate their community's near future to:
  - public agency plans (e.g. Will Idaho improve its state park here? If so, when? Can small lots of standing dead timber be released from federal lands for logging?)
  - societal trends (e.g. U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement; markets for "white" and "red" chips)
  - global projections (e.g. markets for forest products in the Far East)
- help refine, update local development goals and plans,
- build leadership strategies that, perhaps, influence the larger external forces that bear on a local community's welfare.

3. Curriculum Development. I.CSC could further adapt its curricula and offer assistance in helping other institutions develop new curricula:

- high school courses for both academic credit and community service,
- high school work-study programs in the summers,
- modularized adult occupational instruction for employees who work seasonally or part-time and may seek supplementary employment (the "tent-making priest," for instance),
- for-credit shortcourses for professionals, in partnership with professional associations,
- for-credit shortcourses for business managers, supplemented with a pre-course diagnosis and a post-course application and evaluation,
- computer or telephone conferences as a part of courses for dispersed practitioners ready for upper division studies,

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- a train-the-trainer--or "multiplier"-- program to orient technically qualified residents to quickly help other residents acquire--and practice--intermediate level skills--grant writing, business accounting, computer communications, dynamic reading, orienting and supervising temporary, part time employees who meet the public . . . Again, trainer-multipliers might come from within the ranks of LCSC students in those communities.

- develop an array of "starter" courses--perhaps, on one hand, a process oriented, problem solving seminar that enables adults to approach a current occupational concern that may then whet an appetite for general education, or, for other students, a set of general education courses that then leads into occupationally oriented training or, yet a third option, a personal development workshop that contributes to occupational and academic goals.

4. Feasibility Studies/Action Research. Arrange to match selected residents, and, perhaps, external resource persons to mutually identify and study the feasibility of alternative small scale enterprises--the technical, economic, market, management, and social feasibility of e.g.:

- alternative forest products (yewwood for a cancer drug, wild landscaping plants)

- agricultural enterprises--beef, dairy, hay. . .

- tourism, recreation services, such as a RV park

- adapting public facilities to serve a broader cross section of the public--handicapped recreationists, for instance.

- co-production (public and private production) of some public services--incubator for service businesses, vocational education to train potential workers for emerging vacancies in local industries, community recreation and theatre . . .

To repeat, perhaps, current students could be brought on the teams of local entrepreneurs/veteran LCSC students/new students and professors--to study the feasibility of alternative enterprises.

5. Developing New Organizations. LCSC faculty could consult with residents intent on developing organizations that tap into public, private commercial, and private voluntary initiatives to launch new ventures:

- cooperative markets,

- community-based historical dramas and artists' series,

- neighborhood associations, as within a retirement settlement,

- ways to mutually reinforce otherwise unrelated developments, e.g. refurbishing the community hall and developing a community theatre.

Again, some present LCSC students may offer unusual and valued insights: they know their community--its organizations, residents, values and potentials; they possess a level of confidence from successfully completing higher education; they can gauge their neighbors' readiness to pursue college level education; they can depict where college studies fit into personal, enterprise, organizational and community development.

5. And finally, this interviewee's insight into higher education's potential contribution to community economic development: "Get LC to figure the numbers for us to win the Idaho lottery!"

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Interviews

Focus Group Interviews, January 8, 10 and 17, 1991, were constructed around the notion that each community's economic development is a "Thousand Mile Journey." The interviews were designed to help us understand:

1. Where and when the community economic development groups started on this journey,
2. Where they are now, and
3. Where they want to be in the near future.

Within the context of that "trip," we asked questions about:

4. What helped you move from where you started to where you are today?
5. What would help you progress from where you are now to your next goals?

Each group interview was audio recorded; Dwight Pace posed questions as suggested on the interview guide (see App. B) given to each participant; with broad,colored felt tipped pens, Jim Long wrote key words in sequence on a time line on a long strip of easel paper on the wall. Throughout, we checked to see if each person's ideas were expressed and summarized accurately on the easel paper. We did not seek consensus, but rather a range of ideas, perceptions.

In this way then, each Focus Group constructed an "oral history" of its community's economic development activities and attributed its progress to any number of internal and external resources. The evaluators then, qualitatively, extracted LCSC's and others' educational contributions as identified by the participants. Each group also sketched a road map ahead and identified useful accessories. Similarly, the evaluators identified possible resources that LCSC might consider offering in the near future.

Participants of the Focus Group Interviews were seven to eleven members of each community GEM Team, an "organization of organizations," representative of most any group interested in economic development. For example, the representation on the Grangeville GEM Team--dubbed "Grangeville Economic Management" Team--included

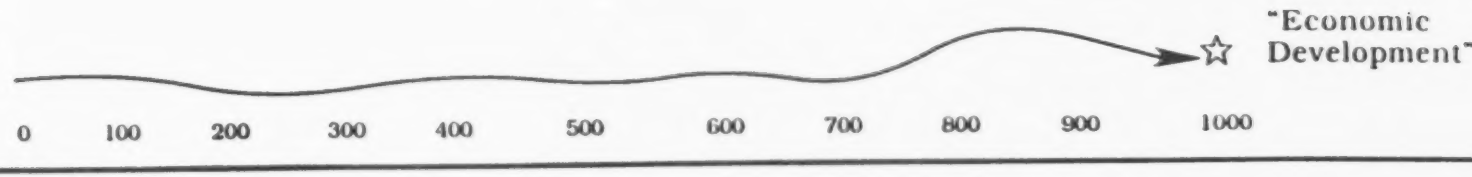
schools, retailing, arts, senior citizens, tourism, financial management, newspaper, county government, real estate, small business development and medical care.

Teams were organized in each GEM Community--communities certified by the Idaho Department of Commerce GEM Community Program, an effort of state government to enable local communities to strategically plan their economic futures.

A local contact person arranged the date, time, length and place of each interview and invited GEM Team members. The group interviews ranged from one to two hours.

For this evaluation, the evaluators assumed that each set of GEM Team participants adequately represented knowledgeables active with economic development activities in each community--persons knowledgeable about the community, its economic history, goals, plans and the contributions or potential contributions of continuing education.

Economic Development: A Thousand-Mile Journey



3. Where did you start in 19__?

2. Where are you now?

1. Where are you headed?

4. What helped?

7. Where do you want to be by 1992?

5. What more would have helped?

8. What would help?

6. What may have interfered?

APPENDIX C

Triggers for Economic Development

We found that often some public event, private episode, or crisis initiated the process of exploring economic development in the communities. We labeled these initiating forces "triggers"; they are summarized as follows:

Societal trend or cycle:

- o economic downturn
- o "timber crunch"
- o end of local employment at the completion of public construction projects--dam, fish hatchery
- o "They talked about taking away our school."

Community infrastructure

- o inadequate housing for teachers, for senior citizens
- o old saw mills that phased out because they did not compete economically or could not access timber
- o "septic tanks overflowed!"

An immediate target

- o "Get the prison," i.e. attract a new state prison facility to a given community
- o save our school

A legacy:

- o contributions in the bank from earlier development efforts
- o "a grant to get the bag plant"

APPENDIX D

Residents' Assessment of Their Progress and Status

Residents told us their story and, then, a bit more reflectively, assessed their progress and current situation. Here's a summary:

- Community Trends:
  - school attendance is down
  - little year-round employment for young people
  - attracting employees with higher levels of schooling
  - pride in the community's vitality, life style, quality of life
- Community Infrastructure--"we":
  - put up a sign, lighted the bridge
  - saved our school
  - developed a recreation district
  - improved our community hall
  - started the historical drama series
  - built a mini-park, ball park
  - cleaned up
  - beautified downtown
  - upgraded the sewer and water system
  - nurtured some cottage industries, a marketing cooperative, some "pocket" development, new motel
  - didn't lose a nurse practitioner
  - improved the hospital
  - became eligible for a matching grant
  - completed DOC's mock site visit and now are listed in DOC's directory of likely investment sites o clarified city council's governing role and citizen's volunteer service role
  - helped build community consensus and cooperation around five year goals and one year plans
- The Team:
  - is well organized
  - communicates well
  - gathered useful survey data
  - is well aware of resources "out there"
  - is in contact with agencies concerned about rural life
  - has produced marketing materials--brochures, maps, videos
  - can not respond to inquiries professionally

APPENDIX E

Non-Educational Helps

Following is a list of non-educational "helps" identified by the GEM Teams. Listing them as a non-educational help does not necessarily imply that residents did not learn from these "helps"; it means, that in the judgment of the evaluators, the contribution to economic development was primarily for something other than continuing education. The items here were extracted from the groups' "oral histories"; some accounts started in the early 1960s.

Public Organizations

- Clearwater Economic Development Association
- Lewis Clark Heritage Foundation's assistance in developing a local historical event
- a grant to employ a professional drama director for a local play
- Idaho Travel Council grant from Idaho Department of Commerce
- North Central Travel Association's cooperation in developing an outdoor recreation program
- U.S. Forest Service's employing high school youth in the summer
- U.S. Farmers' Home Administration local representative
- U.S. Housing and Urban Development representative
- University of Idaho faculty
- The guidance--and pride!--provided by the GEM Community certification process

Private-Public Cooperation

- Washington Water Power's assistance in setting up a formal organization
- GTE
- Potlatch Corporation's receiving local forest products
- mill owner who purchased plumbing supplies for employees to install private toilet and septic facilities during the mill's "downtime"
- trading private and public parcels of land for community facilities
- access to the recreation district's new barbecue grill used to host tourists to softball tournaments that attracted "hundreds of visitors"
- local "working people" who volunteered countless hours to "clean up, fix up, and paint up"
- cooperation among the county government, retailers and snowcatter's association to establish and groom cross-country trails
- consensus and cooperation among--and recognition from--Chamber of Commerce, city council and county commissioners
- an office "downtown," staffed regularly

Events

- festivals
- plays
- historical commemorations
- memorial softball tournaments

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Money

- o grants from outside sources
- o matching grants
- o development funds, stocks, dues, contributed and invested locally

APPENDIX F

Near Term Goals

Community Development

- o keep our town
- o keep our school
- o grow (in population) enough to maintain our town, our school
- o maintain "climate," quality of life--pace, low crime rate, independence

Community Infrastructure Development

- o win the school's commitment to the park plans
- o stablize the timber industry, develop alternative forest enterprises
- o retain current businesses
- o expand current businesses
- o help entrepreneurs win credit
- o attract new small businesses
- o attract the "senior market"--retirees, retirees in transition
- o win financing for a retirement settlement
- o attract tourists, recreationists
- o add new employees in businesses, in public agencies with stable jobs
- o upgrade signs
- o improve the park
- o beautify the river front
- o maintain an LCSC satellite office downtown

Enterprise Development

- o test feasibility of alternative developments
- o help home-based businesses o help local mills
- o increase the "designation" of public resources (e.g. reservoir) allowed for other, alternative, purposes (boating)
- o destination resort

Team Development

- o build a higher profile now